



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

TO: Operations Committee

DATE: February 1, 2008

FR: Deputy Executive Director, Operations

W.I.: 1235

RE: Incident Management Program Update

Traffic congestion continues to rise on Bay Area freeways, with up to half of the total congestion attributed to non-recurring traffic delay caused by incidents. The Bay Area Freeway Service Patrol and Call Box Programs and the 511 Traveler Information System continue to be effective incident management tools. In recent years, however, MTC has taken a more active role with the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans in exploring a broad range of new tools and strategies to reduce the impact of traffic accidents. Studies nationwide have proven definitively that every minute saved in detecting an incident results in several minutes reduced in subsequent congestion to motorists, and the faster an incident is cleared, the fewer secondary accidents will occur.

We know from our experience in the Bay Area that the key constraints to effective incident clearance are accurate detection and assessment of the incident in order to deploy the appropriate level of response. Attachment A provides a summary of the major incident management efforts to address these constraints that are currently underway or will be implemented in the near future on the I-880 Corridor. In addition to I-880, MTC staff has been very active in several other incident management-related activities in the Bay Area. MTC has contributed funding to C/CAG to assist with implementing their Incident Management Pilot Project, which will implement ITS infrastructure on local streets for improved incident management purposes along the Hwy 101 corridor in San Mateo County and create traffic detour plans. The Center-to-Center data exchange project will be activated this spring, which will allow for the exchange of real-time traffic data between Caltrans and the numerous Smart Corridors in the region. Traffic video will be added to this data stream soon after. Finally, an MTC-funded project to upgrade the freeway surveillance camera control system in the Regional Transportation Management Center will be completed in the next two months.

Staff will be available to answer any questions you may have at your Committee meeting.

Ann Flemer

Attachment A

Incident Management Activities I-880 Corridor

I-880 Corridor Demonstration Project

Many of the new incident management strategies identified will be tested on the I-880 corridor. This corridor was chosen because the ITS infrastructure is already in place to enable accurate monitoring of traffic conditions, I-880 is a key freight corridor for the region's economy, and there is strong interest by local stakeholders and first responders to join together to improve incident management practices. Boundaries of the I-880 Corridor Demonstration Project are from 7th Street/West Grand in Oakland to Industrial Parkway in Hayward.

Several new strategies have been tested or will be underway shortly:

- **Interagency Coordination Workshops:** These workshops are intended to enable CHP, Caltrans, and local first responders to assess current incident management practices, discuss alternative practices to improve incident clearance, and build consensus on enhancements and a stronger foundation for ongoing interagency coordination. Staff is planning to conduct two one-day workshops for first responders along the I-880 corridor. If successful, additional workshops may be coordinated within the region on a corridor-by-corridor basis.
- **“Clear the Way” Campaign:** This public awareness campaign is aimed at educating the public on the “Quick Clearance” legislation passed in 1999 that requires motorists involved in minor, non-injury collisions to move their vehicles over to the shoulder or off the highway. Motorist surveys are currently being distributed along the I-880 corridor by FSP drivers to assess the current level of awareness about the “Quick Clearance” legislation. Next, new “Clear the Way” signs will be installed, and a media campaign will be rolled out jointly with CHP and Caltrans. Evaluation of the effectiveness of these signs will help inform the CHP's decision for statewide deployment.
- **Digital Photogrammetry** equipment to significantly reduce the time it takes CHP to conduct accident investigations has been evaluated. The CHP is considering this option.
- **Automated incident detection** through the use of existing freeway CCTV cameras has been tested, and determined to be a viable means to more quickly detect accidents or stalls in freeway lanes. Caltrans is considering deployment along I-880.
- **Medium duty tow trucks** that would enable the Freeway Service Patrol to tow some larger vehicles such as moving vans and commercial delivery trucks.

Several new and enhanced strategies are also being considered:

- Installation of Extinguishable Message Signs along arterial routes to be used when traffic must be detoured around an accident scene.
- “Responder” Digital Communication System designed to transmit annotated digital images of at-scene incident information, to enhance first responders' ability to assess the need for appropriate equipment, resulting in quicker clearance of an incident.

- Enhancement of the existing ramp metering network to enable the system to adapt to local traffic conditions to more efficiently regulate vehicle access onto the freeway.
- Development of a standard After Action Review process so there is a post-incident debriefing for first responders for all major incidents, resulting in improvements for subsequent incidents.

I-880 Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) Initiative

The I-880 Corridor is also one of eight “Pioneer Sites” selected by the USDOT to plan, design, model, and demonstrate the benefits of Integrated Corridor Management (ICM). The objective of the ICM Initiative is to demonstrate how the freeway, arterials and transit systems can be better coordinated to maximize use of the total transportation capacity along a corridor. MTC and Caltrans; in partnership with the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA); Alameda Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) and the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) are currently collaborating to develop, deploy, and evaluate combinations of new institutional approaches and advanced technologies to offer travelers more choices and use existing transportation facilities more efficiently, particularly when major traffic incidents occur. The Concept of Operations and system requirements documents are currently being finalized and will be submitted to the US DOT for consideration for funding the implementation phase.